

Undersecretary Of Army Visits Joliet Arsenal

**Archibald Alexander,
Other High Officials
Inspect Property**

A group of army officers and civilian officials, headed by Archibald S. Alexander, undersecretary of the army, spent the tenth anniversary of Pearl Harbor at the Ordnance Ammunition center in Joliet, inspecting its facilities and personnel which operates the army's multi-million dollar Ordnance ammunition contracts.

The distinguished visitors landed in a two engined Air Force transport at Joliet Municipal airport about noon where they were greeted by Brig. Gen. Joel G. Holmes, commanding general of the Ordnance Ammunition center, who was accompanied by his executive staff.

THE LIMOUSINE which headed the cavalcade of government motor vehicles from the airport to the arsenal was bedecked with the four-star insignia designating the rank of the undersecretary of army's office.

In a welcoming address to the official visitors Gen. Holmes explained the mission of the Ordnance Ammunition center, which, thru its 27 government owned or contractor operated installations directs the mass production of standard army ammunition, propellants, explosives, and chemicals, exclusive of that used in small arms weapons.

GEN. HOLMES explained how the Ordnance Ammunition center, as a part of the Ordnance corps, is the national business administration, production, and procurement direction center for the program which produces the nation's output of large caliber ammunition and its component parts.

The installations and activities of the center extend all over the United States. The program includes the major cost-plus-fixed-fee contracts amounting to slightly less than one billion dollars and employing approximately 40,000 persons, and the direct government production output which amounts to more than a million dollars and involves approximately 8,000 persons.

This is exclusive of the procurement and supply of inert ammunition components produced by more than 700 individual business concerns, ranging from small machine shops with a dozen or so employees to some of the largest corporations in the automotive industry which produce a variety of items ranging from small washers to intricate rocket motors and heavy shell bodies at a cost of more than a billion dollars.

LT. COL. John G. Zierdt, executive officer to Gen. Holmes presented key staff members who gave a more detailed report on various divisional functions. Among these were Col. J. H. Simpson who discussed the over-all organization and the functions of the comptroller's office; Col. G. W. Mulder explained the Material Division activities, and how the component parts of ammunition are procured; the facilities offered thru the Manufacturing division and the problems involved with loading explosives and propellants into shell bodies and other types of ammunition.

In the afternoon the visitors inspected the Kankakee unit of Joliet Arsenal where chemicals are produced by the U. S. Rubber

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company. The group next visited the production lines at Joliet Arsenal where they watched operating lines load explosives into shell bodies, assemble the component parts, and turn out the completed shell ready for packaging, storing, shipment, or immediate use.

The six-hour conference and inspection visit was concluded with a dinner in the Joliet Arsenal cafeteria prior to the start of the return flight to Washington at return flight to Washington late today.

Accompanying the Undersecretary on his official visit were Clay Bedford, deputy director, and William Campbell of the Defense Production Authority; Brig. Gen. A. T. McNamara, executive officer to the undersecretary; Col. Roland Anderson, Harry Erlicher, special assistant, Mr. Michael E. Kalette, special aide; Brig. Gen. Merle H. Davis, chief of the ammunition branch, industrial division, office, chief of Ordnance, and Lt. Col. Elbert Hasenwritter, in the logistics branch of the general staff.